

## Joint Capital Planning Committee – 2024 Capital Improvement Program

### Questions and Responses

#### Public Works

1. Did the plan for North Pleasant Street include contra flow bike lanes and could that piece happen sooner?
  - a. Yes, it did. We do not believe there will be sufficient room with current layout but will re-examine.
2. Does making traffic one way help alleviate speed issues
  - a. Yes, but it could vary depending on the street.
3. How do these safety improvements (resident requests) relate to plan for five way intersection and planned improvements to north pleasant street?
  - a. The Town is not aware of any connection between the safety improvements proposed and the plan to redesign the intersection.
4. Are the solar powered speed signs completely self-contained?
  - a. Yes, they are self-contained.
5. Field equipment should that be shared with regional.
  - a. If approved, the Town will work out a financial arrangement with the region to compensate the Town for these services when the equipment is used on regionally owned land.
6. Can Fort River Intersections be added to planning list?
  - a. Yes, it will be added, it is already on the radar for Public Works.
7. Can you please share specs on each of the individual pieces of equipment: brand/model, cost, specific purpose/need, and expected frequency of usage?
  - a. Specific brand, model, and costs will be determined by open competition through a competitive procurement process. The equipment will be used frequently depending on weather conditions.
8. Can you confirm that all of these pieces of equipment are solely for use on grass fields and not on artificial turf fields?
  - a. The debris blower in the priority two request could be used on either turf and grass. The rest of the equipment is intended for grass fields.
9. Has soil testing of the fields been performed or is it planned (in order to determine the appropriate maintenance regimen for each field)?
  - a. The Town has tested soils in the past and plans to do more in the future. Funding for soil testing is part of budget addition request in FY24.
10. Has the DPW consulted with a professional groundskeeper and grass maintenance experts (private companies, UMass Turf program, others) to develop a program specific to meet our fields' needs?
  - a. The Town employs two individuals who graduated from the University of Massachusetts. One of which has a degree in plant and soil science. This individual is one of the lead employees caring for the fields. The Town has employed various consultants, such as Weston & Sampson, who have provided guidance on field maintenance.

11. Will DPW staff undergo specific training on athletic field management?
  - a. Public Works employees have engaged in training for turf management and field health in the past and would like to do more in the future depending on the budget.
12. In the operating budget, how much has been spent per year on consumables (fertilizer, seed, etc) for all the fields over the last decade or so and what is being proposed for this coming FY?
  - a. Public Works has requested an additional \$63,000 for FY24 to support the fields. This request is not yet approved. The Tree and Grounds department has a \$2,000 budget for Fertilizer/chemicals. Most of the funding for consumables used on the regional fields comes from the regional school budget. There is not a large budget for this at the regional schools.
13. In the operating budget, how much has been spent per year on staffing (FTE, PTE) for all field maintenance work over the last decade or so and what is being proposed for this coming FY?
  - a. There are no full time FTE dedicated to field maintenance, instead field maintenance represents a portion of multiple employees' jobs. During the spring it can be the majority of at least two employees daily work but that changes as the year goes on.
14. All items are noted to use "conventional fuel technology". Which of these pieces of equipment have electric-powered versions and what are the costs?
  - a. We are not aware of electric substitutes for this equipment doing the type of work proposed.
15. Guilford did not mention Groff Park, Mill River, or Plum Brook among the athletic fields that would be serviced by this new equipment (only Regional School District fields, Community Fields, Kiwanis, and Fort River). Please correct or explain why these fields would not be included.
  - a. The equipment would be used on all athletic fields.

#### Facilities

1. What is the Town Boiler number being requested? Is there a potential for on demand for hot water? What systems? Basis of estimate?
  - a. The total project budget is \$228,000 however the general fund request is \$140,000 and assumes award of grant funds. If the grant funds do not come through, the Town would pull from prior year funding for Town wide repairs or seek sustainability funding. The estimate was based on experience with other capital projects.
2. Describe how prior year spent. How are priorities set? What are the major items likely for the coming year? North Amherst School investment? New federal direct payment for replacing HVAC with heat pump technology. Will the same amount be need next year? Central Fire Kitchen: \$30 K. Will the AFD team have input in choices? Will equipment be able to move to new facility if this moves forward? Basis of estimates?
  - a. In FY22 and FY23, funds have been spent on a heat pump replacement at APD, asphalt repair, emergency repairs to APD chiller, water fountain upgrades, repointing of Town Hall, mold remediation, plumbing repairs, sprinkler repairs, North Fire Station overhead door replacement. Priorities are set in conjunction with department heads based on the urgency of the work. The Facility Manager has a list of projects to work on and balances those with unanticipated issues that arise. Upcoming projects were discussed at the Joint Capital Planning Committee meeting and included various improvement to all facilities. Lower amounts of recurring funds have been proposed for upcoming years. AFD will be consulted as part of the kitchen renovation and the equipment will not likely be able to move to the new building (counter tops, cabinets, sinks).

3. APD roof: \$300,000. Design only? What is the cost of replacement? Can the solar assessment be grant funded? Use sustainability fund? Any opportunity for economies of scale with PV panels if coordinated with new school?
  - a. The \$300,000 is the request for replacement. Design money was awarded in a prior year.
4. APD Heat Pump Replacement: \$65,000. Eligible for federal direct credit? Guidelines due this year for heat pumps. Can Amherst join with other towns/cities for tax guidance?
  - a. Possibly.
5. Bangs Second Floor: \$50K. Is this a long-term change in configuration? How much “rent” and use is there of the health clinic? Is this for CRESS? Will open space make conversations less private or one on one meetings? Vision?
  - a. Yes, the Town is considering its use of space as it added two new departments. The primary renter of the Bangs Center is the Musante Health Center. The rent is approximately \$70,000 per year. CRESS is already on the second floor in a recently renovated space. This project would renovate the remainder of the second floor. Open Space allows for flexibility to meet future needs of the Town.

#### Information Technology

1. Would it be possible to scale back phased request? What would we give up with \$150,000?
  - a. Yes, the request could be scaled back by extending the life of equipment, which could result in more service requests or breakdowns.
2. Jones IT: \$29,000. If the building moves forward, will these be needed in the next 2 years? Could this be postponed to next year? Spend only if construction postponed?
  - a. This request is needed either way. The equipment that is in good condition can be used in the new facility.

#### Public Safety

1. Body Cameras APD: \$251,000 Last year there was state support for purchase. EOPS grant? Why 50 cameras? Not all in use at once. Not essential for safety? Reduce to 25?
  - a. This request could be reduced to 35 or 40 cameras. There are times throughout the year where all staff are needed however some of those employees will be in the APD and not require a body camera.
2. Dispatch Console: \$323K Does this also connect to CRESS? How integrated? Record system? Able to assess trends with data from current system?
  - a. Yes, it will connect to CRESS. This request is for the hardware, it is not the record system. The record system is a separate request coming in a few years.
3. Hybrid Cruisers: \$300K for 4. \$75K each. Is there grant support? Why just 3 years? These could last longer, operating costs? Can we shift to longer life and mileage? Experience?
  - a. There may be grants. The length is based on usage and experience. Typically, the vehicles are replaced when they hit 100,000 miles and the maintenance costs begin to accelerate.
4. Pumper Engine: How many times a year do we use the fire engines to respond to fires? Rough estimate.
  - a. See services levels in budget book, page 125.  
<https://www.amherstma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/61440/FY23-Budget-Final-5222>
5. Have we every asked UMass to help pay for the engines?

- a. We bill UMass and Amherst College based on call volume. The billing rate includes capital costs.
- 6. Do we track staff time, overtime, and ambulance trips related to UMass. Including the recent weekend.
  - a. We track calls/trips to UMass.
- 7. Should UMass pay for the full cost of one ambulance and some staffing
  - a. Part of ongoing discussions. UMass does make payment now for calls that includes capital and operating costs.
- 8. Urgency: Are both urgent? New Pumper trucks adds \$174,000 to debt service in FY26. A year when \$1.6 million deficit
  - a. Generally, all vehicles could be delayed however it results in greater risk of breakdowns, higher maintenance costs, and complicates replacement schedules. Given current supply chain issues and delivery times for both the pumper and ambulance (approx. two years to receive), a delay means the vehicle will arrive three years from the date of approved funding instead of two years. For these two specific vehicles, delays mean we will stray from the ten year replacement for ambulances and twenty year national standard for pumper trucks.

### Schools

- 1. Where is charging infrastructure going to?
  - a. The charging infrastructure would likely be located at the Amherst Regional Middle School where the transportation department and vehicles are housed.
- 2. Electric bus and batteries. The notes say possible grant. Are these net costs after the grant?
  - a. No, the grant share is not included. It will need to be added, possibly from closed capital funds.
- 3. Federal new direct credits. Do the bus or batteries qualify? Did we buy any in 2022? If yes, could submit in 2023 to test the new federal provisions
  - a. Possibly and there are several other grant programs that have been released to support the acquisition of electric school busses.